

Looking closely

A learning story

We have been encouraging the children to look closely at flowers and other objects before painting and drawing them. Today Ethan tackled the flowers, looking carefully at how spiky they were. When I thought he had finished he took his painting inside and put it on the easel.

"I haven't finished yet," he said. He chose some more paint and began mixing colours, which he added to his painting. He then went to the collage area and chose pieces of coloured paper to stick on his picture. "I'm decorating it now," he told Karin.



Short-term review

Ethan has shown interest and involvement in challenging art activities. He is continuing to experiment with mixing colours. He expresses his ideas in a range of ways, adding to his picture at each stage.



Three weeks later

A learning story

As Ethan hangs up his bag, he looks at the hook and says, "They look like elephants with little trunks."

I ask him if he would like to make a book about the elephant hooks. I move the hooks closer while he is drawing the elephants.

Short-term review

Ethan has developed great understanding about the meaning of literacy and is using his knowledge in a fun and meaningful activity.



What's happening here?

These two items in Ethan's portfolio demonstrate his developing interest and competence in the visual arts. This exemplar is about his involvement in a teacher-initiated activity, drawing a still life. The teacher talks about "encouraging the children to look closely at flowers and other objects before painting and drawing them". Three weeks later, Ethan spontaneously recognises the "elephant-like" shape of the coat hooks, and the teacher encourages him to record his observation by drawing from a model, an activity that he is skilled at.

What aspects of noticing, recognising, and responding to learning in the arts does this assessment exemplify?

The teachers here recognise Ethan's interest in the visual arts, and they seek ways to motivate and challenge his interest. They respond by presenting Ethan with opportunities for extending his learning in this area. In this exemplar, the teachers provide a vase of flowers as motivation in the art area and encourage the children to observe them closely in order to develop their painting skills. They recognise the opportunity provided by Ethan's comment about the coat hook – "They look like elephants with little trunks." Many of Ethan's previous art challenges are documented in his portfolio, and he is able to revisit the material and reflect on the progress he is making in his learning.

What does this assessment tell us about learning in the arts (using a *Te Whāriki* lens)?

Ethan is participating fully in the visual arts experiences available in this setting. He is developing skills in painting and drawing as well as confidence in his ability to be creative and expressive. This exemplar shows his persistence and his developing view of himself as being capable and competent. Ethan can mix and match colours, which shows his familiarity with the properties of paint. He has a playful perspective and a focused eye. In this exemplar, the Communication/Mana Reo strand of *Te Whāriki* is integrated with the curriculum principle of Empowerment/Whakamana.

How does this assessment exemplify developing competence in the arts?

Ethan's learning is enriched by opportunities made available by his teachers. He is able to observe closely and to note key features of the items he is representing. He takes an interest in several elements of representation (line, colour, balance, space, shape, and pattern). He experiments with different painting techniques, sometimes using a brush and sometimes other tools, to make lines and marks on his paintings. Ethan also uses other media to give his paintings added dimensions. His ability to view the coat hook as an elephant's trunk and to then draw an image of his perception reflects his imaginative view of the world.